

# IN THE WORKS

*TUNE IN HERE FOR NEWS ABOUT PERSONNEL SYSTEM REFORM IN WASHINGTON*

January 2005

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*A Great Workforce, Getting Better*

## **BUDGET PROPOSES SALARY INCREASES**

Public employees have a fundamental role in the effective delivery of state services, and cost-of-living adjustments are simply part of the state's cost of doing business. Governor Locke's 2005-07 biennial budget proposal reflects this belief.

The current proposal provides pay increases for all state employees and includes \$106 million to fund the labor contracts negotiated under the 2002 Personnel System Reform Act. Under the law, the Governor is required to submit the cost of the agreements for an up or down vote by the Legislature. Rejection of the fiscal terms of the contracts would re-open negotiations.

### **Non-represented Employees**

Another \$118 million provides salary increases for those employees who are not represented by a labor union, including non-represented employees of state colleges and universities. For these employees, the budget proposal includes a salary-and-benefits package similar to the agreements negotiated with unions.

### **Health Insurance**

Under the proposal, state workers still contribute a targeted 12 percent of their health insurance premium costs, as they do today. But because overall premium costs are going up, individual employees will pay higher monthly costs. The state's contribution also will rise in the next biennium. ★

## **SALARY PROPOSAL DETAILS:**

*Applies to all general government employees. Terms vary for higher education employees. Salary increases subject to legislative approval.*

### **Union-represented employees**

Receive a 3.2 percent increase effective July 1, 2005. Another increase of 1.6 percent (except Teamsters, who receive 2.9) is provided effective July 1, 2006, until June 30, 2007, when it expires.

### **Non-represented employees**

Receive a 3.2 percent increase effective July 1, 2005. Another increase of 1.6 percent is provided effective July 1, 2006, until June 30, 2007, when it expires.

### **Salary Survey**

For those employees who lag the most behind market rates (more than 25 percent) in the 2002 Department of Personnel salary survey, funding is provided to increase their pay to within 25 percent of market rate.

### **Job Class Consolidation**

For those employees who will be affected by job class consolidations, salary increases will be granted when necessary for consolidation.

### **Performance Pay**

For non-represented employees, the state provides \$8 million for performance recognition awards. Participating agencies would require approval of their performance pay plans by the Department of Personnel. ★

**VIEW PAST ISSUES: AUG 2003 - JAN 2005**

## NEW JOB SPECS OUT FOR REVIEW

Have you been waiting to find out what's happening with your job class? Then you'll want to check out the next round of proposed changes.

Current job classes are being folded into new occupational categories. The new job specifications describe the occupational categories and the levels within each category.

New job specs are being posted in four "batches" over the next several weeks. Find them at the Department of Personnel's website:

<http://hr.dop.wa.gov/hrreform/classplan.htm>

The first two batches now are open for comment, with closing dates of January 18 and 25 respectively. Two more batches will be posted January 27 and February 3. Each batch will be available for comment for approximately three weeks.

This is the second round in the plan to phase in the new occupational categories. The plan was announced last spring. New job specs for Group 1 were adopted September 2004 and will be put in place June 2005.

Analysts will revise this current round of job specs (Group 2 and 3) after comments have been received. The specifications then will be presented to the DOP director for adoption in spring. Those specifications and categories will become effective January 1, 2006, at which time the state will have one-third fewer classifications than when the Personnel System Reform Act was passed in 2002.

And what happens to all those classifications not included in either the first group or the current round? They are part of the long-range plan. Timing for the remainder of the implementation should be ready by May. So if a diligent search for your classification comes up empty on the Group 1 or Groups 2 and 3 lists, stay tuned to the listserv (<http://listserv.wa.gov/archives/hr2005.html>) for the latest information. ★

## NOTE ON JOB CLASS CONSOLIDATION

The consolidated job classes being phased in over the next several years more broadly define levels of work within "occupational categories."

Occupational categories will allow agencies to better match the skills of employees with the needs of specific positions, rather than narrowly defined generic job classes.

Employees will be able to gain broader skills that will enhance mobility and career advancement opportunities.

In addition, agencies will have greater flexibility to make changes to a position's duties and responsibilities in order to respond to changing business needs.

## WASHINGTON WORKS TRAINING ON THE WAY!

The first roll-out of Washington Works classes has begun! This initial round of training primarily targets end users of the new HRMS computer system and human resource professionals who have responsibility for implementing changes in their organizations. Training for a broader audience will become available in the spring. Visit [http://hr.dop.wa.gov/training/washington\\_works.htm](http://hr.dop.wa.gov/training/washington_works.htm) for a current schedule of Washington Works training, which will be updated as schedules are completed. ★

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### HRMS COMPUTER SYSTEM “GO LIVE” DATE SUSPENDED

In late December, Gene Matt, director of the Department of Personnel, announced that he was suspending the plan for the new Human Resource Management System (HRMS) to “go live” in March 2005. That’s the date that the first group of agencies was scheduled to begin using the new system in place of the old personnel/payroll computer system.

“Our number one goal is to make sure that we have a quality product that will fully meet the state’s needs,” Matt said. “After carefully considering input from agencies, quality assurance consultants and project managers, it is clear that efforts to force the project into the current target dates would have a detrimental effect on the end product.”

Added Matt, “I have asked the project managers to take the next several weeks to identify a revised timeframe and steps necessary to ensure a high quality product that meets all requirements.”

It has not yet been determined how this delay may impact implementation of other Washington Works projects. That determination is part of the planning process taking place over the next several weeks.

In the meantime, work on the HRMS project will continue to move forward, and user training will begin as scheduled on January 10. ★

*Have feedback? Email it to [washingtonworks@ofm.wa.gov](mailto:washingtonworks@ofm.wa.gov)*

***Check out the WASHINGTON WORKS website at  
[www.washingtonworks.wa.gov](http://www.washingtonworks.wa.gov) for more information.***

*Use the online [feedback form](#) to comment on any aspect of the reform effort.*

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